

House Resolution 881

By: Representatives Lane of the 158th, Knight of the 126th, Burns of the 157th, Lane of the 167th, Heard of the 104th, and others

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Urging the State of Georgia to reallocate funds obtained from sportsmen's license fees from
2 the state's general fund to the Wildlife Management Area land acquisition program for
3 hunting and fishing; and for other purposes.
- 4 WHEREAS, hunting and fishing are important parts of Georgia's cultural fabric and rich
5 history; and
- 6 WHEREAS, the Wildlife Resources Division of the Department of Natural Resources is the
7 most important group in Georgia affecting the future of hunting and fishing in this state; and
- 8 WHEREAS, the funding of the game management, fisheries management, and law
9 enforcement sections of the Wildlife Resources Division of the Department of Natural
10 Resources is accomplished primarily through the sale of license fees to sportsmen; and
- 11 WHEREAS, in the mid-1980s, Georgia's sportsmen recognized the need to purchase land for
12 the preservation of hunting and fishing opportunities, and they have been the leading group
13 of Georgians to provide direct financial support to Georgia's land and wildlife conservation;
14 and
- 15 WHEREAS, sportsmen voluntarily shouldered an increase in license fees so as to use these
16 additional funds to purchase land for Georgia's Wildlife Management Area system; and
- 17 WHEREAS, GO bonds were issued by Georgia to fund the acquisition of these lands; and
- 18 WHEREAS, that land, now totaling more than 60,000 acres, has been purchased and paid for
19 in its entirety by Georgia's sportsmen; and
- 20 WHEREAS, the license fee funds used to retire that debt are no longer required to retire that
21 debt; and

1 WHEREAS, those funds annually have averaged \$4,537,851.00 per year in each year since
2 2000; and

3 WHEREAS, the total contribution to the state's general fund generated by the 1987 license
4 fee increase totaled \$83,137,035.00 through June of 2006 and continues to increase each day;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, the total cost to retire the bonds used to purchase land over these years totaled
7 only \$54,027,470.00, creating an overpayment by sportsmen in the amount of
8 \$29,109,565.00; and

9 WHEREAS, the need to purchase land for sportsmen and their activities remains today; and

10 WHEREAS, the \$4,537,851.00 annual license fees that have been paid to debt retirement can
11 now be returned to the current operating budget of the game management, fisheries
12 management, and law enforcement divisions of the Wildlife Resources Division for now and
13 into the future.

14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
15 this body hereby urges the members of the General Assembly to consider plans to reallocate
16 the \$29 million in excess funds deposited into the state general fund since 1987 to the
17 sportsmen's land acquisition program to be used to fund the Wildlife Management Area land
18 acquisition program for hunting and fishing.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
20 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the Georgia Outdoor
21 Network and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.